

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 2637

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: TWO EX-COMMUNISTS UNIMPRESSED WITH PCI LIBERALIZATION

REF: MILAN 1594

1. EXECUTIVE OFFICER SPOKE SEPARATELY DECEMBER 2 WITH TWO OF ITALY'S BEST KNOWN EX-COMMUNISTS. THEY CALLED PCI LIBERALIZATION OVER RECENT YEARS MORE APPARENT THAN REAL. EACH, HOWEVER, FELT PARTY CAPABLE OF SOME CHANGE AND URGED HARD-HEADED APPROACH TO BRING IT ABOUT. BOTH APPROVE OF STRONG ANTICOMMUNIST STANCE OF MILAN DEPUTY MASSIMO DECAROLIS, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT SOME RESERVATIONS. BOTH AGREED US SHOULD HELP SOCIALISTS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE.

2. TWO FORMER PCI MEMBERS IN QUESTION ARE RENATO MIELI AND GIULIO SENIGA. MIELI, WHO WAS DIRECTOR OF PCI OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER UNITA'S MILAN EDITION IN 1946-1948 AND HAD BECOME CHIEF OF PCI'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECTION (JOB NOW HELD BY SERGIO SEGRE) BY TIME HE LEFT PARTY IN LATE 1957, PRESENTLY RUNS MILAN-BASED STUDY CENTER ON PROBLEMS OF COMMUNISM. MIELI IS LUCID, WELL-CONNECTED AND RESPECTED AS SERIOUS ACADEMIC.

3. GIULIO SENIGA, MORE SENTIMENTAL AND ROUGH-HEWN THAN MIELI, LEFT PCI IN 1954. CLOSE COLLABORATOR OF PCI VICE SECRETARY GENERAL PIETRO SECCHIA AND ONE OF PARTY'S MOST NOTORIOUS DEFECTIONS, SENIGA WROTE BOOK IN 1961 ACCUSING TOGLIATTI OF COMPLICITY IN STALIN'S EXCESSES. HE IS NOW HEAD OF FRIENDS OF ISRAEL ORGANIZATION

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IN MILAN, SOMETIME CONTRIBUTOR TO AVANTI, AND MEMBER OF PSI.

4. BOTH MIELI AND SENIGA CLAIMED THEY WERE NOT VISCERAL ANTI-COMMUNISTS. MODERN ANTI-COMMUNISM, EXPLAINED MIELI, IS NOT EMOTIONAL ABHORRENCE OF 1950'S BUT REASONED CONTENTION THAT COMMUNIST SYSTEM IS FAILURE, PRODUCING ONLY INEFFICIENCY AND BACKWARDNESS. CAPITALIST SYSTEM, ON OTHER HAND, CREATES WEALTH, ENCOURAGES NEW IDEAS, AND BEST INSURES POLITICAL LIBERTIES. THAT IS WHY EMINENT POLITICAL AND OTHER REFUGEES STILL VIEW AMERICA AS ONLY PLACE TO GO. IT IS ON THIS BASIS, SAID MIELI, THAT I FIGHT COMMUNISTS.

5. ALTHOUGH MIELI AND SENIGA BOTH BELIEVED BERLINGUER MORE DEMOCRATIC AND LESS CYNICAL THAN TOGLIATTI, THEY AGREED PCI HAS NOT CHANGED TO EXTENT PUBLIC THINKS. SENIGA SAID FLATLY THAT, IN AREA OF INTERNAL DISSENT AND RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA, PCI HAS MADE NO PROGRESS AT ALL. ON DISSENT, ALTHOUGH AMENDOLA AND OTHERS MAY EXPRESS VIEWS PUBLICLY WHICH CONTRAST WITH THOSE OFFICIALLY ADOPTED, THEY KNUCKLE UNDER WHEN IT IS TIME TO VOTE. THERE HAD BEEN NO DISSENTING VOTE IN PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR YEARS. THOSE WHO REALLY DID SPEAK OUT, LIKE ITALIAN RESISTANCE FIGURES AND SENATOR UMBERTO TERRACINI, MIGHT STAY IN PARTY BUT HAD ABSOLUTELY NO VOICE IN PARTY AFFAIRS.

6. WHILE SENIGA EMPHASIZED LACK OF INTERNAL DISSENT IN PCI, MIELI WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY. PCI HAD FAILED TO DISSOCIATE ITSELF FROM SOVIET VIEW OF WORLD IN ANY IMPORTANT WAY, LIMITING ITSELF TO CRITICISM OF RUSSIAN POLICIES WHICH AFFECTED PCI'S FREEDOM TO CONDUCT ITS OWN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. PARTY HAD NEVER SUGGESTED DISSOLUTION OF WARSAW PACT, FOR EXAMPLE, FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED SOVIET LINE ON MIDDLE-EAST, AFRICA, AND ELSEWHERE. ITS POLICIES WERE CONSISTENTLY ANTI-WESTERN. PROPER WESTERN ATTITUDE TOWARD PCI, THEREFORE, SAID MIELI, SHOULD REMAIN ONE OF FUNDAMENTAL DISTRUST.

7. THAT DID NOT MEAN PCI COULDN'T BE DEALT WITH. BUT TREATMENT HAD TO BE TOUGH. MIELI SAID IT WAS MISTAKE FOR US NOT TO TALK REGULARLY WITH COMMUNISTS, THOUGH HE CALLED RECENT COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS SEMINAR IN BOLOGNA WRONG PLACE TO DO
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IT. US SHOULD NOT LET THOSE WELL-DISPOSED TO PCI ACT AS INTER-MEDIARIES BETWEEN US AND COMMUNISTS. THAT IS ALREADY CONCESSION IN PCI EYES, AND WAY TO WIN COMMUNISTS' RESPECT IS NOT BY MEETING THEM HALF WAY BUT BY KEEPING PRESSURE ON. US, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOULD BE MEETING PRIVATELY WITH PCI FIGURES AND PUTTING HARD QUESTIONS TO THEM ON FOREIGN POLICY STANCES AND OTHER QUESTIONS.

8. SENIGA, TOO, THOUGHT PCI FEET SHOULD BE HELD TO FIRE, BUT BY ITALIANS. PARTY SHOULD BE MADE TO PAY PUBLIC PRICE FOR YEARS OF OBSTRUCTIONISM IN GOVERNMENT, FOR DEPENDENCE OF SOVIET FINANCING, FOR FAILURE TO ALLOW MEANINGFUL INTERNAL DISSENT. SENIGA OFFERED NO IDEAS, HOWEVER, ON HOW TO CONVEY THIS TO ELECTORATE.

9. ASKED ABOUT RECENT PRESS AND PARTY FUROR OVER MILAN DEPUTY MASSIMO DECAROLIS, BOTH MIELI AND SENIGA SAID THEY AGREED SUBSTANTIALLY WITH DECAROLIS' TOUGH POSITION VIS-A-VIS PCI. MIELI ALLOWED AS HOW DECAROLIS MIGHT BETTER HAVE TEMPERED HIS LANGUAGE. BUT DECAROLIS WAS RIGHT IN APPEALING TO ITALIANS TO MAKE CLEAR CHOICE BETWEEN WESTERN, CAPITALIST ECONOMIC ROAD AND WHAT COMMUNISTS ARE PROPOSING. DECAROLIS WAS CLEARING AIR OF IDEOLOGY-RIDDEN CLICHES THAT BEDEVIL ITALIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND REPRESENTED MODERNIZING FORCE OF WHICH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SORELY IN NEED. AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE ISSUE OF ROAD DECAROLIS APPEARED TO HAVE STARTED ON, MIELI ADMITTED THAT THAT WAS WORRYING. IN NEAR TERM, ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WAS ONLY ONE POSSIBLE AND TO BRING IT DOWN EXTREMELY RISKY. PRESENT GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, HAD TO BE KEPT AFLOAT FOR DECENT PERIOD AND TIME USED TO STRENGTHEN DC AND PSI.

10. SENIGA, TOO, LIKED WHAT DECAROLIS WAS DOING, THOUGH HE COULD NEVER COLLABORATE DIRECTLY WITH MAN WHOSE CHARACTER AND BACKGROUND WERE SO DIFFERENT FROM HIS OWN.

11. WHAT SHOULD US BE DOING TO HELP DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN ITALY? BOTH EX-COMMUNISTS FELT WE SHOULD BE AIDING SOCIALISTS. MIELI SAID PSI IS ON RIGHT TRACK AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE CONTACTS WITH OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS (ESPECIALLY GERMANS) AND, MOREGENERALLY, TO MAKE THEMSELVES INTO MODERN PARTY. PSI SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN SOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT, NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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DIRECTLY BUT THROUGH ITALIAN ORGANIZATIONS. SENIGA, PSI MEMBER HIMSELF, SUGGESTED MORE TRIPS FOR SOCIALISTS TO US, PARTICULARLY TO MEET WITH AMERICAN UNION OFFICIALS AND SEE US UNIONS IN ACTION. HE HAD VISITED UNION PEOPLE IN NEW YORK IN COMPANY OF MILAN MAYOR ALDO TOGNOLI IN SEPTEMBER (REF), AND THAUGHT MORE SUCH CONTACTS WOULD SERVE VERY USEFUL PURPOSE. FINA

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